

April 15, 2014

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
BUREAU OF HIGHWAY DESIGN**

CONFERENCE REPORT

PROJECT: Hampton Falls – Hampton 13408B
Non-Federal
Taylor River Bridge Replacement on I-95

DATE OF CONFERENCE: April 9, 2014

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: Hampton Falls Town Hall – Selectmen's Meeting Room

ATTENDED BY:

C. Perron D. Smith P. Stammns
C. Blackman M. Low (HTA)

SUBJECT: Progress Status Update

NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

This meeting was held to update the Towns of Hampton Falls and Hampton on the current project status of the Taylor River Bridge replacement. P. Stammns gave a brief overview of the project and M. Low followed by discussing the project in more detail. A PowerPoint presentation was utilized for the meeting (attached) and will be posted to the project website.

The project site is located two miles south of the Hampton Toll Plaza between Exits 1 and 2, just south of the I-95 Liquor stores. The purpose of the project is to replace the red listed 15' x 8' box culvert with a 74' span bridge to address flooding concerns on I-95 and upstream properties. The last public meeting on this project was held on June 15, 2010. At that meeting the Department presented alternatives that would replace the bridge carrying I-95 over the Taylor River approximately 600' to the south of the existing location to the historic channel location, and either remove or replace the dam.

Since the last public meeting, the Department has advanced field investigations of subsurface soils. During the investigations it was discovered that the soils in the historic channel location are highly compressible. This new soil information has led the Department to alter the plans and to locate the proposed bridge in the existing location. The added benefits of keeping the bridge in the existing location include: simplifies traffic control, reduces the construction duration, and reduces costs.

Due to complexities and timeframes required to obtain permits for the dam work, the bridge replacement portion of the project will be advanced separately from the dam under the 13408B project. The dam will remain in place during the new bridge construction and the existing spillway will be modified to connect to the wider bridge opening. The dam project will be advanced under the 13408C project. The construction start date for the bridge work is

anticipated to begin in the summer of 2015 and will be complete in the summer of 2018. The Department, in cooperation with the Department of Environmental Services (DES) and the Department of Fish & Game (F&G), will need to complete additional environmental and hydraulic studies prior to making a decision on whether to replace or remove the dam. These studies will help provide the Department with enough information to make an informed decision from a water quality, fish habitat, and adjacent landowner standpoint. The construction work associated with the dam project is expected to take place between 2018 and 2020. Another public meeting will be held in advance of a determination on whether to replace or remove the dam.

Summary of the Questions (Q), Answers (A), and Statements (S):

Q: What will happen to the dam during construction?

A: The dam will remain in place during construction.

Q: Why was the dam removal/replacement separated from the bridge project without letting the public know?

A: The work associated with the dam needed to be separated to allow for advancement of the bridge replacement. The replacement of the bridge is the critical element due to the existing bridge being on the state's red list.

Q: The original plan shown to the public had the proposed bridge located approximately 600' to the south of where it is shown currently, where the historical channel was. Why was this alternative advanced early on?

A: It is common to advance conceptual engineering ahead of complete field explorations. As more information became available it became evident that poor soil conditions near the historical location of the channel would pose major settlement problems for the roadway approaches to the bridge.

Q: Is there a chance that the dam can be left in place?

A: At this point the Department does not have enough information to determine if the dam will be replaced or removed.

Q: What will the water level be during construction?

A: The Department is still evaluating what the alternatives are. The intent at this point is to maintain the existing pond elevation and complete construction activities outside of the tidal influence.

Q: What is there to gain from further environmental sediment studies?

A: The Department is committed to investigating the hydraulics of the impoundment as well as studying the effects of sediment transport.

Q: What company is doing the sediment transport study? Where are they located?

A: The company working on the sediment transport study is HDR/Hydroqual and they are located in New Jersey. The individual who wrote the memo for Exponent, the company that the Town of Hampton hired to comment on the original study, formerly was employed by HDR/HydroQual the preparer of the draft sediment transport study.

Q: What is the status of the sediment transport study? When can the Town of Hampton have a copy of the study?

A: The sediment transport study is still in draft form, when it is finalized it will be distributed.

Q: Will Exponent be able to review the study and can we get a copy of HDR's scope?

A: Yes and yes.

Q: Is there a sediment study being done for the dam and the bridge?

A: No, there is one combined sediment study being completed with various alternatives.

Q: Will the widening of the channel impact the flow?

A: On a sunny day there will be no difference in flow. During a storm event the impoundment is expected to be lower by approximately one foot. This is due to the spillway being longer and being able to pass more water over the top.

Q: Will the overflow culvert remain?

A: Yes, for this project. Depending on the outcome of the dam removal or replacement the overflow pipe may be discontinued at some point in the future.

Q: How efficient is the existing fish ladder?

A: Currently the fish ladder is not operating as intended and is operating inefficiently.

Q: Will the new fish ladder work?

A: Yes.

Q: Who is responsible to maintain the fish ladder?

A: The Department owns the fish ladder, however the NHF&G services, stocks fish, counts fish, and maintained the fish ladder in the past.

Q: Can the fish ladder be improved without being replaced to save money?

A: There will be a fish study this summer to evaluate all of the available options. Also, if the dam is replaced the fish ladder will be replaced by necessity.

Q: How much is the public input weighed in the decision making process?

A: The Department takes all comments into consideration before making a decision.

Q: Is a study being done to make sure that the clam flats are not going to be affected?

A: Yes. This will be part of the sediment transport study that is being evaluated. The Department will review the findings and any public input, and make an informed decision.

S: There was general confusion as to why the dam might be removed if the bridge is being built in same location as the existing dam.

A: The dam will be removed or replaced regardless of where the bridge is located.

Q: Has anyone looked at the definition of a design storm, given the newer stronger storms?

A: Yes, this project is using up to date climate information for design storm intensity.

Q: How will the new bridge be built on top of the old box culvert?

A: Work will be started from behind the existing box culvert. The box culvert will stay in place during construction of the new bridge. Then once the new bridge is built the existing box culvert will be removed. This will be somewhat complicated, but it will be constructible.

S: There was general concern that in 2010, the last time the Department gave a project update, the message that was conveyed to the Town was that the dam would be staying regardless of the bridge scenarios.

A: At this point the Department does not possess enough information to make that determination.

Q: Where will the project funding source come from?

A: This project is funded 100% by the Turnpike Capital Program.

Q: Will there be an open water area between the two bridges? If so will there be barrier installed?

A: Yes there will be open water that will be protected with guardrail in the median.

Q: There was concern that if the pond level drops that the dry fire hydrant operation may be impacted.

A: The Department will investigate this further.

Q: Wouldn't it be more cost effective to build the bridge with the dam all at once?

A: Due to permitting issues and timetables, building everything at once is not a feasible alternative. Due to the complication of obtaining a dam permit and the critical nature of the Red Listed bridge, it was not prudent to wait to do both activities at the same time.

Q: Why is it different now versus four years ago dam permit wise?

A: The proposed dam is in a different location and the Department does not have enough information to apply for a permit at this new location.

Q: Is there any difference in sediment now versus 2010?

A: The flow is different due to a different bridge location. The results of the sediment transport study will be needed to move forward.

Q: Will the plans be made public?

A: Yes, they will be posted on the Department's project website.

S: There was a general concern for property values if the pond elevation is lowered.

Submitted by:

Charles E. Blackman
Charles E. Blackman, P.E.

CEB/ceb

NOTED BY:

cc:

M. Low, P. Stannas

Project Website, W. Johnson, P. Salo